

Contractors Said Making Visible Progress Toward Completing Auditorium

BY SUSAN USHER

Completion of the Odell Williamson Auditorium may still be weeks away, but Brunswick Community College Trustee Dean Walters says it's in sight for the first time since he joined the board last summer.

"We're starting to see the end in sight or at least understand the scope of what we have remaining to do," said Walters, who was appointed to the board's building and grounds committee and has since acted as a ramrod on the auditorium project. "I don't believe the process is over, but we're getting a little bit better grip on it."

Approximately a year after the project was to have been completed, BCC Trustees declared general contractor Hatcher Construction Co. in default, then fired the company and in effect, its subcontractors as well, and Graka Builders Inc. of Whiteville.

Since then, the signs of progress: steady progress on the "punch list" of items not completed by former general contractor Hatcher Construction and its subcontractors is "going real well," with inside work nearing completion but outside work scheduling contingent upon good weather. New contractor Graka Builders Inc. of Whiteville is taking "before" and "after" pictures to document work.

Vice President for Administration Ben DeBlois reported that there are "indications" ITT Hartford, the insurance company holding the completion bond on the project, has started contacting subcontractors and beginning to make payments to them for work that was done, but for which they have not received payment from Hatcher.

"It's encouraging because ITT has finally acknowledged some financial responsibility," he said, with trustees Chairman David Kelly adding, "ITT denied for so long they had any responsibility. That's good news."

Architect Ken Phelps reported that bills are being sent directly to ITT Hartford, and the company has responded that it will look for the architect's reports regarding satisfactory completion of the work. ITT Hartford has agreed to use some of the same subcontractors that were working for Hatcher.

A proposal to shop for a new landscape/site work contractor is on hold, because the subcontractor previously on the job, Dickerson, has agreed to finish its part of the work at no additional cost. Dickerson's parent company, CBH, has notified BCC it intends to file a lien against the auditorium because Hatcher still

owns the company money.

Houston & Associates, an engineering firm in Shallotte, is working with county engineer Robert Tucker on design of a water line to serve the auditorium. The line could conceivably be approved and installed in approximately 90 days.

Officials with the N.C. Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources are "aware of what's happening," Walters told fellow trustees, and have agreed to be "patient," but not indefinitely. Meanwhile, the weather hasn't been suitable for either paving or grass seeding for sedimentation and erosion control on the site.

Sunland Fire Protection Inc. of Jamestown, working under a change order to Town and Country Plumbers' contract, will be installing additional fire protection sprinklers at a cost of \$25,320, less than had been anticipated.

"It sounds like we're getting a savings of more than \$7,000, but I've learned with this business, nobody gets excited yet," said Walters. "I'm sure something is missing."

Events scheduled through June in the auditorium include a Career Exploration Clubs of North Carolina state conference; productions of "Charlotte's Web" and "Aladdin" for school children by the Professional Children's Theatre of Knoxville, Tenn.; dance recitals by the Brunswick School of Dance and Oak Island School of Dance, the Brunswick Little Theatre production of "Kismet" and a North Carolina Symphony pops concert.

In other business, trustees: granted educational leave, not to exceed 480 hours through June as provided in the personnel policy, to Assistant Dean of Continuing Education Velva Jenkins and Public Information Officer Anne Marie Bellamy, who are working on master's degrees in business administration.

Clarified campus policy relating to political campaign activity, as requested by Trustee Willie Fullwood. The SGA traditionally holds a meet-the-candidates forum and invites all candidates. Major candidates, for example, those seeking the governorship, may be allowed on campus, but their opponent(s) will also be invited to come. Signs are not allowed on campus and candidates may distribute literature while on campus, but not through students at other times.

Walters, chairman of the legislative committee, urged trustees and other college supporters to "keep the pressure on" the state legislature for adequate funding support, in light of

the statewide support of the system indicated in the November bond referendum. "Tell them what an asset our community college is to our community and how important it is to the county's future."

Vice President for Instruction Johnnie Simpson presented lead automotive mechanics instructor Roy Hornaday with a lapel pin and certificate. He was BCC's nominee for the Board of Community Colleges/First Union Foundation Excellence in Teaching Award. A letter of commendation stated, "Clearly, your colleagues believe that you represent the best in community college teaching, which is certainly evident from your nomination form." In addition to the respect he has earned as an instructor, Hornaday has befriended both staff and students with car trouble.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER


Don't Be A Dummy

Crash "dummies" Vince (Neil Warren) and Larry (M.C. Roberts) joined Student Government Association members Jessica Robertson and Minde Vince at West Brunswick High School last Wednesday to encourage fellow students as they left campus to buckle seat belts and shoulder harnesses to reduce the risk of automobile accident injuries. Above, Vince and Jessica reward driver Ben Bias for having "buckled up for safety".

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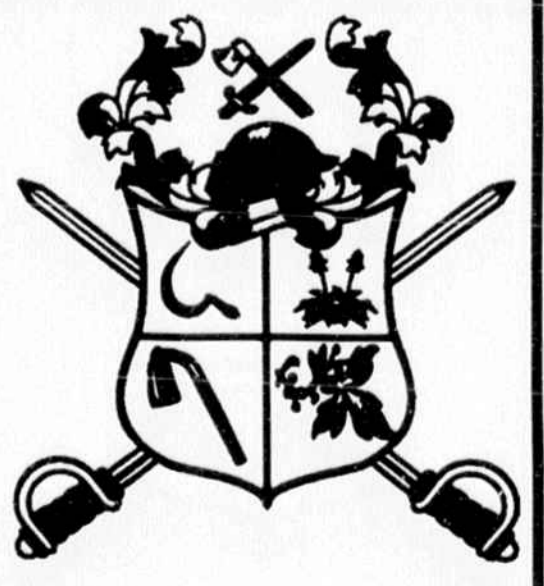
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